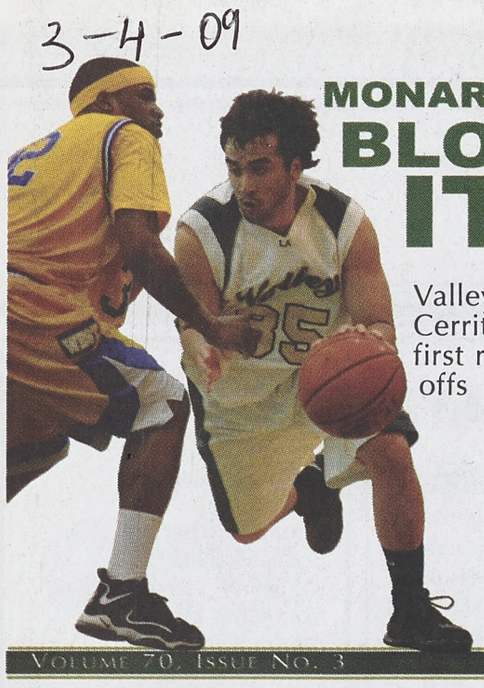
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MONARCHS BLOW IT!

Valley falls 80-76 to Cerritos College in first round of play-offs

Sports | Pg. 6

LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE'S
VALLEY STAR
THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

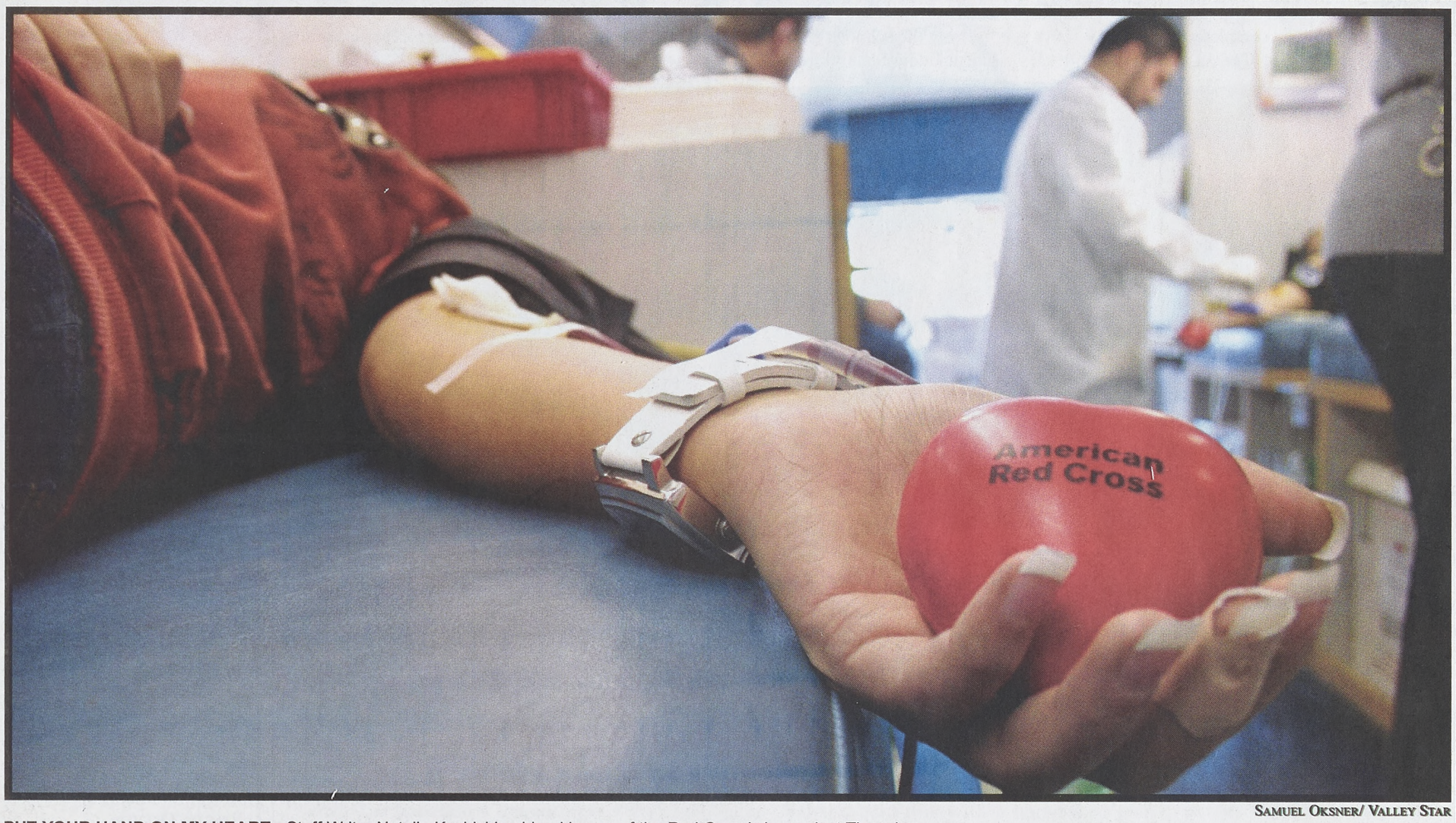
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SAMUEL OKSNER/ VALLEY STAR

PUT YOUR HAND ON MY HEART - Staff Writer Natalie Keshishian blood in one of the Red Cross's buses last Thursday.

A Little Pain Goes a Long Way

NATALIE KESHISHIAN
STAFF WRITER

Armed with two Red Cross blood mobiles, a dozen nurses, staff, and volunteers Valley College and the American Red Cross kicked off another successful blood drive on Thursday.

Set up near the Allied Health and Sciences Building, students were able show up between 9a.m. to 3p.m. to register and donate blood. Many of the students at the blood drive were returning donors such as Justin Taleifi, a Respitory Therapy major who has been donating for the past five years.

"It feels good," "said Taleifi. "What is better way to help someone in 10 minutes than by donating blood...and it's free."

A small table was set up outside the mobile with a big sign that read blood drive. Delores Stell a blood services volunteer for the American Red Cross was there to register arriving donors and provide them with information. Donors also received a college raffle entry card as well a free coupon to Mimi's Café.

After registering in the front you are given a number and after a short wait one of the nurses call you into the blood mobile.

see *Blood Drive* page 4

Cafeteria Manager Unaware of Ruiz "Tab"

■ **Unsanctioned payment between Ruiz and former cafeteria cashier**

SHARON HARDWICK
STAFF WRITER

Associated Student Union Chief Justice Steven Ruiz had a secret "tab" with a campus cafeteria cashier, who no longer works for Integrated Solution Services Inc. said campus cafeteria management. The former cashier allowed Ruiz to walk into the cafeteria, pour himself cups of coffee and leave without paying.

According to Larry Cantrell, manager of Valley College's cafeteria, the cashier, who was let go for "other reasons," knew Ruiz and allowed him to take coffee and return later with payment. While the cashier verified to management that Ruiz did pay for what he took, Cantrell made it clear that this was an unsanctioned arrangement unknown to him.

"We don't run a tab [here]," said Cantrell. "Students are here today and gone tomorrow." Furthermore, employees are not allowed to make this type of payment arrangement with students he said. "It's my decision or Victor [Meochor's] decision," said Cantrell.

In an effort to re-establish credibility and his "reputation," said Cantrell, Ruiz went to the cafeteria last week and apologized to him and Meochor. According to Cantrell, Ruiz purchased

see *ASU* page 2

Forensics Tournament Brings Verbal Warriors

ASTRID SEIPELT
MANAGING EDITOR

The mere thought of public speaking can conjure deep fear, the shakes, and full body sweats in someone about to step in front of a crowd, but Valley College played host to hundreds of students this weekend who thrive on addressing a room full of strangers.

More than 500 students from more than 50 schools across the western United States competed in the Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association Spring Championship Tournament, which Valley hosted for the fourth time in a row. Not to be confused with the science of catching criminals, forensics is the art of public debate or argument. Competitions can include classic two-on-two debating on a unknown topic or performance of poetry and prose.

Valley's team competed against not only community college teams, but also four-year universities over the weekend and took fifth place overall in the Community College Sweepstakes division.

Team member Annie Leroux put their success down to teamwork.

"We have a bunch of different coaches who work with us, but we also have peer coaching," she said. "There is definitely a lot of teamwork. At the beginning of the past semester, we weren't doing as well and I think it was because we focused so much on our own events. [Helping each other] makes winning much more exciting."

Orange Coast College student Blake Longfellow, who competed in Speech to Entertain, Programmed Oral Interpretation, and Persuasive Speaking, said that his involvement in forensics began when he was told it would help him transfer to UCLA. It was not long, however, until his goals changed.

"My major is actually economics...I was told that the best way to get into UCLA is to compete in speech," said Longfellow, as he adjusted his tie and suit jacket. "Now, I've fallen in love with it and it has become a passion. I want to transfer to UT Austin because of their speech team."

Forensics competitions offer more than simple debate between teams, according to Josh Miller, a Valley speech professor and organizer of the event. Competitors contended in 15 different categories, including After Dinner Speech, Extemporaneous Speech (current events), and Cultural Artifact, which is based on the speaker's cultural background. Students can also compete in Persuasive and Informative Speech.

Twelve students from the Valley forensics team won awards across 10 categories. Annie Leroux (Informative),

see *Speech* page 2



GRETTEL CORTES / VALLEY STAR

NEXT! - Staff answer calls at Valley's Health Center that is available to students across the college district.

Affordable Healthcare On Campus for All

■ **You don't have to go far for any health concern help**

NATALIE KESHISHIAN
STAFF WRITER

While focusing on getting to class to time and approaching midterms, students can forget to take care of something else vital; their health. Nestled between locker rooms and basketball courts in the North Gym, the Valley College Student Health Center allows students access to low cost or free health care, for $11 a semester.

Located in the North Gym, the Health Center gives students more than check-up at the nurse's office. Free urgent care and first aid is available, as well as Physician and Physician Assistant services that are available by appointment. In addition, students can receive low cost services, including tuberculosis testing, immunization; cholesterol screening and pap smears. Referrals are also available for physiological testing, pregnancy testing and family planning, mammograms, substance abuse and more.

"I encourage students to stop by and meet us," said Sonia Nodal, a physician's assistant who has been working with LAVC students for the past five years. "If you have any questions whether we can do or not do something, just ask. You would be surprised how much we can help you. If we cannot help you, we are also a great resource center."

For students who attend more than one campus in the Los Angeles Community College District, the $11 charge covers all nine schools in the district, giving those in need of healthcare more freedom.

According to staff members, the center sees an average of 2,500 students a year, for a number of different services. In order to visit the Health center, students must be currently enrolled and have paid their health fees. First time students should bring along a photo ID and a registration fee receipt to show proof of fee payment.

Many students, including nursing major Erika Reganyan, are not aware of the type of services or location of the center.

"I paid my health fee every semester but I didn't know what the benefits were, until a few semesters later I found out from a friend who had visited the health center," said Reganyan.

The center is aware of their relatively unknown status, and the staff encourages students to attend the annual health fair, which will raise awareness and take place in Monarch hall on Wednesday, May 13.

"One of our goals is to meet the students and make them more aware of us," said Nodal.

The health center is open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30am to 4:30 pm, Wednesdays 8:30 am to 7:00 pm, and Fridays from 9:00 am to 1:00pm.

Construction and Demolition Continue On Campus

ROBERT R. KING
STAFF WRITER

Valley College students bear witness to the modernization of their campus daily, while the school's administration prepares to begin new projects in the near future including a new Student Services Center.

"We will be breaking ground on the new Student Services center in April," said Valley President Sue Carleo. She also said that the project could take about two years and the center will centralize all student services to one location.

Plans also include demolishing the current school library. According to URS Project Manager Jim Rogers, the project will begin in June. The library will be moved to a temporary location in a bungalow behind the cafeteria during construction.

Students returning for the spring semester were greeted by a maze of fences, work crews and parking lot carousels. They also met several newly completed projects with the new design of Monarch Square acting as the most notable change.

"I think it's definitely an improvement over the way it was before," said student Chris Mower about the square's new paths, benches, and drought resistant shrubs.

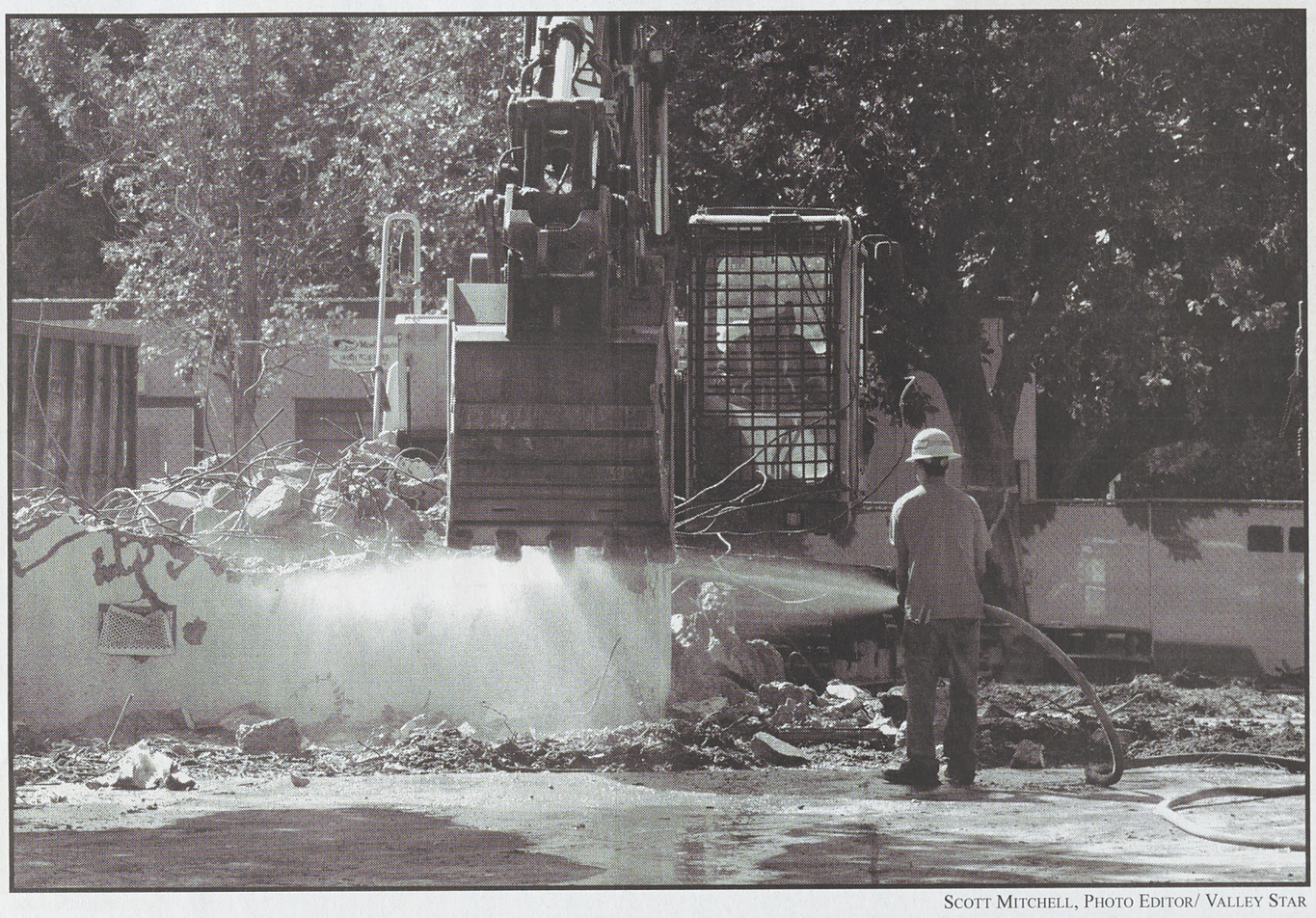
The demolition of the old Chemistry and Physics buildings also highlighted changes during the first two weeks of school. The out-of-date buildings were razed to make way for a new Student Services Center.

Citing all of the changes around campus, LAVC President Susan Carleo said, "We (campus officials) all know how inconvenient the process is for the students and we're concerned about [measures] to help people get around during the process."

Jim Rogers also said that students can expect to see the school's Planetarium upgrades completed in "about a month and a half." He added that construction of the new Child and Family Complex should be complete in January 2010. According to Carleo, the school will use funds allocated from Bond Measure J, passed in the November elections, to update the school's parking. She indicated that if a new study finds that the parking needs of the students are not being met, the school will pursue a multi-story parking structure to help alleviate the situation.

Citing the school's efforts to go green, student Eddie Shahrokh said, "There is a sense of pride about being on such a revolutionary and forward thinking campus."

Construction will also begin in about six months on a new Media Arts building that will centralize all media departments. The plans for ongoing upgrades and future projects, according to school administration, focus on allowing current and future students to maximize their experience at Valley College.



SCOTT MITCHELL, PHOTO EDITOR/ VALLEY STAR

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'ASU'

continued from page 1

a cup of coffee, an entrée as well as paying for the equivalent of twenty cups of coffee as a way of saying sorry.

Last Thursday members of the ASU called a meeting with members of the Valley Star to address what they felt was an "unwarranted" and "false statement" of a story printed last week. At the meeting President Josh Wible made it clear that Ruiz was facing immediate disciplinary action.

"I've been on the phone with Annie Reed all day," said Wible. "… Steve's already going to be brought in front of a disciplinary hearing on this."

According to Annie Reed, associate dean of student services, no such action was being considered.

"No, he [Ruiz] is not facing any disciplinary action," she said last week. "…I would never do anything without an investigation. …I don't know why he [Wible] would say that."

'Speech'

continued from page 1

Thomas Petersen, Arthur Valenzuela (Duo) and LeCoya LeJune (Drama) were the highest placers for Valley, each earning second place in their respective categories.

Speech professor and coach Josh Miller says the team will now turn its focus to the state championships, which are March 19 to 22 in Woodland Hills.

"I think we did fantastic [this weekend]. Last year we took seventh place at this tournament and third place at state… I think we will do well."

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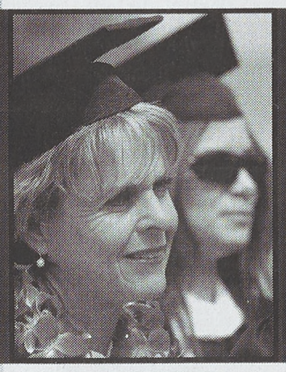
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Taking the Hypocritical Oath

JOE LAFLEUR
OPINION EDITOR

You're out of work and no matter where you apply no one seems to be hiring. You wish that you could find comfort in the fact that you're not alone, but you just can't. Don't worry though, because shortly Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger will be working enough for us all when he begins filming a new Sylvester Stallone film.

Currently, unemployment in California is the highest it has been since 1983. The Los Angeles Times reports that the unemployment rate has reached 10.1 percent, meaning that 1,863,000 Californians are without jobs. This statistics only includes those who have not already exhausted their unemployment opportunities.

After playing political tug-o-war with the state's finances and with more than one in 10 workers currently without a job, Schwarzenegger and California lawmakers finally passed a new budget on Feb. 20, with the hopes that it will bail the state out of it's nearly $42 billion deficit.

A section of this new budget plan includes something Schwarzenegger fought very hard for, tax incentives for films, implemented to encourage shooting in California, thus increasing jobs. So, to add to the obvious irony of our governor taking a break from his state-appointed duties to appear in an action movie, the film will not even be shot in California.

But there are more important issues at hand. With so many Californians out of work, one would think that there must be something in the new budget that would promote job creation, perhaps a plan to encourage people to go back to school to pursue a degree or certification. In actuality, all funding for California State University as well as University of California systems will be cut by 10 percent.

What our state legislature has done is found a temporary means to an end. They silenced the critics who said Democrats and Republicans would not work together, but they did this with a half-baked plan that does not seem to address a major issue in this state – unemployment. For example, instead of securing a plan to restrict big business from continuing to outsource, they went the opposite way and cut state funding for law enforcement by $7.5 million.

As a state in desperate times, we need a sure fix to our dire economic situation, one that would be resolute, as well as solve things quickly (if this exists). Is the want for such a solution asking too much from our politicians? Absolutely not. The key is holding lawmakers accountable for actions, such as taking time off to shoot a movie and failing to write a proper budget. If this plan fails, as it stands now, the legislature will not suffer, we will.

We Stand By What We Print

STAFF EDITORIAL

On Feb. 25, the Valley Star printed a story about Chief Justice Steven Ruiz admitting to stealing coffee. Ruiz said at the Feb. 17 Associated Student Union meeting that, "I stole coffee all last semester." After the story ran, a meeting was called between members of the Valley Star and members of the ASU. The meeting was lead by ASU President Josh Wible.

It was claimed repeatedly by the ASU members at this meeting that the story was unwarranted, misquoted and essentially false. The ASU also stated Ruiz did not admit to theft. The tape from the Feb. 24 meeting was played, however, it was unclear what Ruiz said, only that he said something to the effect of "I deny..." What remained unchallenged, however, was Ruiz's original statement; "I stole coffee all last semester." Ruiz himself, who was present at Thursday's meeting, did not utter a word.

It has now come to light that Ruiz had a tab arrangement with a student cashier at the college cafeteria, and Ruiz is confirmed by this cashier, his friend, to have paid for the coffees he took. This cashier has since been let go. The cafeteria, however, is not in the practice of maintaining tabs with students.

"We don't run a tab, students are here today and gone tomorrow," said Larry Cantrelle, cafeteria manager. "We try to work with students...but [a tab] is my decision or Victor [Meochor's] decision."

When the Star initially asked the cafeteria for comment on Feb. 24, they refused to speak to the reporter.

Wible also said that he had, "been on the phone with [Associate Dean of Student Services] Annie Reed all day," during the meeting, and that Ruiz was facing disciplinary action from the school due to the article we ran. However, according to Reed, no such action is in place.

"No, he [Ruiz] is not facing any disciplinary action," said Reed on Thursday. "...I would never do anything without an investigation. ...I don't know why he [Wible] would say that."

It is further maintained that at a second ASU meeting on Feb. 24, multiple members of the board, made it clear that Ruiz had not stolen coffee from the cafeteria. However, it was only Vice President Arthur Minyasan that addressed the issue at the meeting, saying, "At one point or another he paid for it. [Ruiz] might have called it stealing in a joking around way, but to accuse him of stealing isn't fair," he said. This quote remains undisputed. Paying for something at one point or another just says it wasn't paid for to begin with.

Finally, nearing the end of the meeting, Wible analogized another version of what happened, which had nothing to do with a tab.

"Let me ask you a question," he said as he address the Star staff members in attendance. "You get a cup of coffee and there's 20 people in line in front of you. So you're saying you'll sit down in the cafeteria and drink your coffee, and hang out and wait until that line has gone to come back and pay for it. Are you stealing that coffee?"

It doesn't seem that's what happened. But yes, that is stealing.

Lost in Translation

LAUREN LEES
ONLINE EDITOR

Resting feet up, I open up my book, and begin to travel into the depths of its tantalizing tale, allowing its inhabitants to take shape in my mind without the help of a director or actor. In today's world full of over-hyped movies, many forget literature's place as the first and absolute medium of imagination and fantasy.

With the rush of technology came the advance of moving pictures, then talkies, and now the full-fledged, mass-produced dream machine that is Hollywood. Reading has now dwindled into nerd category when, for so long, the ability to read was a luxury in and of itself.

The unknown secret of literature is, despite its unpopularity in modern day America, that most movies you see stem from great novels unheard of by most. Four of the five Oscar-nominated best picture films of 2008 were novel adaptations.

"Slumdog Millionaire," novel; "The Dark Knight," comic book (but that still counts); "Twilight," do I even have to say it? In fact, the longest and most successful movie series in cinema history is based on a book about a boy wizard.

With that said, who would want to waste the time it takes to finish one novel when, for ten dollars, you can see it all completed in less than two hours? Sadly, the answer is way too many people.

Movie directors, producers, and studio heads take a book, make whatever changes they feel necessary, decide what the characters look like based on the sales of Us Weekly covers, pick the location, and, above all, make sure the ending is happy. In turn, we lose our vision, our meaning, and, most importantly, our imagination with said novel to over-paid executives looking for the next Titanic.

More times than not, the quest for money compels those very people to destroy the essence of a novel, which is evident in the 2008 novel adaptation, "I am Legend," starring Will Smith. For every Richard Matheson fan, that movie destroyed the very meaning of the novel.

First off, the part should have gone to a gaunt Jeremy Irons. Second, the novel takes place in the suburbs, not the city, and finally, in the novel, there is no Emma Thompson scientist curing cancer. But, those 10 million plus people who saw it probably walked away thingking it was "good," compared to the mere millions who read the novel and knew it should have been better.

Not every adaptation is bad; some are arguably good: "The Godfather" was amazing. "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, fantastic; "Gone with the Wind," extraordinary, and the one thing they all have in common is loyalty. These films portrayed the hearts of their respective novels, remaining true to the authors, and especially the readers.

As great as those movies are, their books are even better and that's the only reason why they were turned into movies in the first place. I have long accepted the place of novel adaptations as a cog in the movie industry. I only wish the rest of the world would accept novels independently of movies.

It's a Big Ticking Clock for Barack

IVAN ZUNIGA
STAFF WRITER

As President Barack Obama addressed his agenda in a joint session to Congress Feb.24, he talked about the war in Iraq, jobs, better schools, healthcare reform, reliable sources of energy and the nation's economic future. Now that Obama is president, the case may be, that a lot of his recent decisions may not go over well with most Americans.

For those of you who were able to watch his speech, he had a lot to say about our nation's culture and future. He was very reassuring when addressing the problems Americans face from day to day and discussing the promise that he would work on getting our country in its right place. Right after his address, online polls asked Americans whether they supported the plans he addressed. Some said that he was heading towards the bipartisan way, while others thought he was trying to win over the Republican Party, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll.

However, what people want is for Obama to fulfill the promises he made during his campaign because of the "change" he adamantly told us would happen in this economic struggle.

Other polls said that 68 percent of Americans approve of his job performance thus far as president. He has begun his presidency strong, and the fact that his support has gone down is common for most U.S. presidents in the past like Ronald Reagan, who had a similar rating. The other 32 percent of that poll is most likely comprised of republicans or people who aren't confident whether his plans will work.

This could be a result of some of the decisions he has made since taking office, which seem very different from what he was planning on doing when he was running for president. Approving an increase of U.S. forces in Afghanistan by about 17,000 troops may have surprised everyone who thought less soldiers would be going and more would come back home.

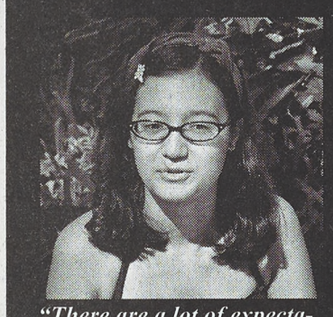
"Obama has a lot of work ahead of him," said Valley College student Lyle Guzman. "I'm sure he will do what's best for everyone and our country."

With the challenges that lie ahead for Obama, Americans might not agree with every decision he makes. We all have different perceptions of how we want our problems to be solved, but we can't stop supporting someone because they do things differently every now and then. We have to be patient through the years to come in order to give him time to solve our problems.

CAMPUS VIEW:

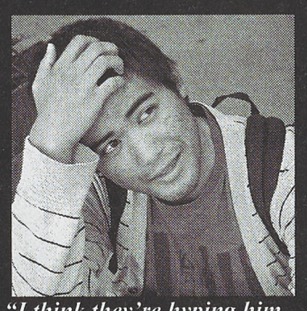
Photos by Klara Miller, Chief Photographer/Valley Star

Do Americans expect too much from Barack Obama too soon?



"There are a lot of expectations, but at least he's trying to make changes. We shouldn't put too much expectation because he's doing what he can."

- Saya Higuchi
botanical science



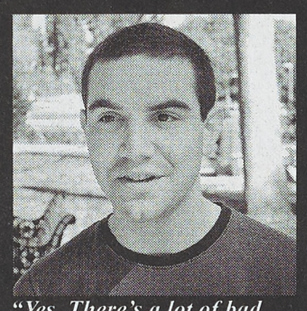
"I think they're hyping him mostly because he's the first the black president and they expect him to do a lot of good things."

-Anthony Paredes
art



"No, becasue he promised everything already. I think he he had time to prepare as a lot of people around him, helped him."

- Maya Hariton
political science



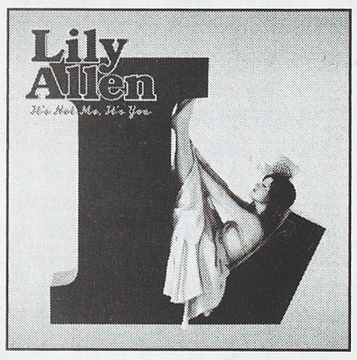
"Yes. There's a lot of bad things going on in the country that no one can fix just like that. It's going to take four to eight years to even get the ball rolling."

- Ethan Shapiro
undeclared

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Send letter to the editor to thevalleystar@yahoo.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and can be edited for publication. A full name and contact information must be supplied in order to be printed. Letters must be recieved by Thursday to be included in the next edition.

CD REVIEW



ASTRID SEIPELT
MANAGING EDITOR

Fans of social commentary in the form of sweet vocals can get their fix courtesy of Lily Allen, in her second release, "It's Not Me, It's You." Although it was delayed for a year due to record label issues, Allen still manages to deliver biting opinions mixed with electro pop, and her unique sound doesn't let you forget who you are listening to.

Allen takes a more grownup direction with "It's Not Me," wanting to distance herself from the retro feel of "Alright, Still." However, the influences of her first album sneak in, with "F**k You," sounding like a curse-word-laced version of a previous single, "Alfie." They sound from the same vein, but their aim could not be more different, from telling off little brother Alfie, to flipping the bird to former President George Bush.

The album, recorded in Los Angeles, does not suffer from the cross-Atlantic location switch, or the change from producer Mark Ronson to Greg Kurstin. Allen sticks to what she knows best and easily chronicles her journey in life since her first album.

She puts her two cents in on instant celebrity in lead single "The Fear," singing "I'll take my clothes off and it will be shameless/'Cos everyone knows that's how you get famous…I don't know what's right and what's real anymore." The song, which deserves first single status, also showcases Allen's improved vocal ability.

It's clear to see that anything in the life of Allen is fair game for song material, but it's the opposite sex that make up the bulk of her inspiration. Her disappointment in a bad lover is detailed by the spaghetti western-synth of "Not Fair," where she complains about being left unsatisfied and the eventual breakup in "Never Gonna Happen."

Her experiences with drug use lead listeners through "Everyone's At It," tackling honesty and drug culture. The 23-year-old muses "So your daughter's depressed/Well get her on Prozac/But little do you know she already takes crack."

As Allen leads the charge of females who aren't afraid to swear in a song or tell you about their criminal transgressions, don't forget Lily was here first, and there aren't many people who can musically bite the hand that feeds them and have the hand not smack them back.



GRETTEL CORTES / VALLEY STAR

OINK, OINK! - A customer works on his laptop computer as a barista prepares his coffee on a lazy Sunday afternoon at the Bourgeois Pig Cafe located on Franklin Ave in Hollywood.

Eclectic Oasis Amid Concrete Jungle In Hollywood

LAUREN LEES
ONLINE EDITOR

North of Hollywood Boulevard between Bronson and Tamarind Boulevard, resides Franklin Avenue. Right above the heart of Hollywood where funkadelic meets the laidback, people stroll down the block with their pets on leashes, enjoying their Sunday and looking for some coffee, books, and lunch.

On this windy afternoon, the dark recluse of the Bourgeois Pig welcomes you inside to the sound of the Beatles and the smell of coffee. The high ceiled electric blue walls, red-lit chandeliers, blue orbs, and a hanging disco ball set the atmosphere for deep relaxation as the customers can read a newspaper, engage in conversation or play a game of chess.

Couches piled high with cushions snugly fill each nook and cranny, while giant mirrors hang off the walls, and golden pigs lay hidden around the café serving as a reminder of where you are. The back of the café hosts a pool table and touch screen computer for guests to enjoy a round of solitaire or quiz their memory with some trivia questions. To the right, a piece of nature sits in a little room, set with fake campfire and a cozy outdoor nighttime feel.

Mike Keiser, who has worked at the Pig for more than a year, commented on the unusual backroom decorations.

"The backroom is the inside of one of our employee's head," he laughs. "Our boss Andrew decided one day... he just wanted like a place in the middle of the city that you could go and not feel surrounded by concrete."

The café sells the regular commodities of coffee, teas, and pastries; with the additional salads, sandwiches, veggie and vegan style panini's. With $10 to spare, you can enjoy some coffee and a sandwich with a good book and forget how quickly time can pass when you're relaxing the afternoon away.

Directly on the corner of Franklin and Tamarind is The Daily Planet, a kooky little shop and newspaper stand. In operation for fourteen years, the store suits its customers, selling all sorts of unique and creative items. From clothing to accessories, magazines to newspapers, photography books to children's literature, jewelry and great knick-knacks, this store is great for finding a gift for that ubercreative friend or filling your home with oddities.

Vanessa Bishop, owner, manager and buyer for thirteen years before buying the place with then co-worker Amy Lee, revamped the store to fit the surrounding neighborhood.

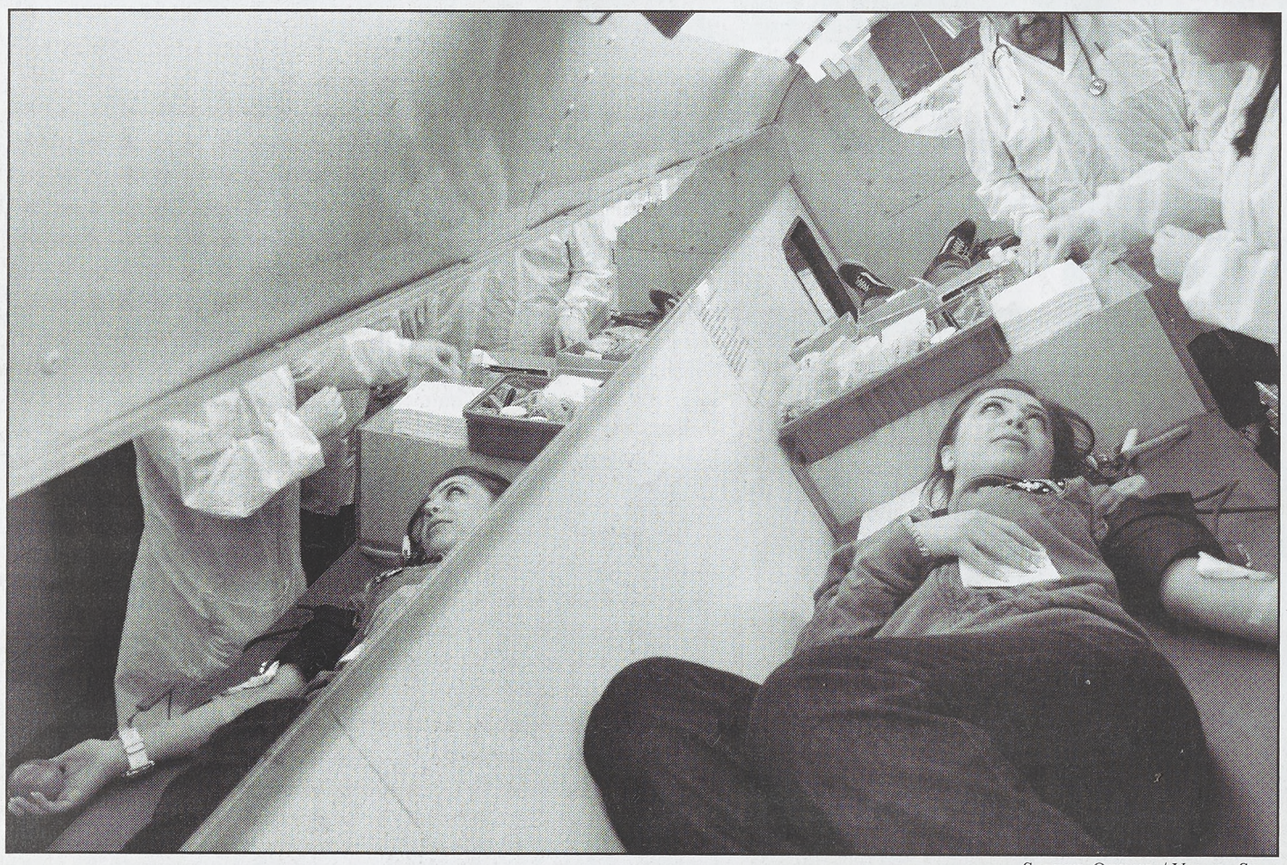
"Basically we cater to the neighborhood which is very bohemian style," she says. "We have a lot of artists, writers, actors, so we get to have fun with what we buy … We're pretty lucky to have such a fun crowd."

Stardom might not be in the bag, but at least you can enjoy the surrounding neighborhood with these great finds and more, penetrating the heart and comfort of bohemian style on Franklin Avenue and beyond.



GRETTEL CORTES / VALLEY STAR

OUT OF ORBIT - Insense and a lot of cool stuff can be found inside.



SAMUEL OKSNER / VALLEY STAR

I'M TRUSTING YOU WITH MY BLOOD - Natalie Keshishian gives blood for last week's blood drive in one of the American Red Cross' blood donation bus.

'Blood Drive'

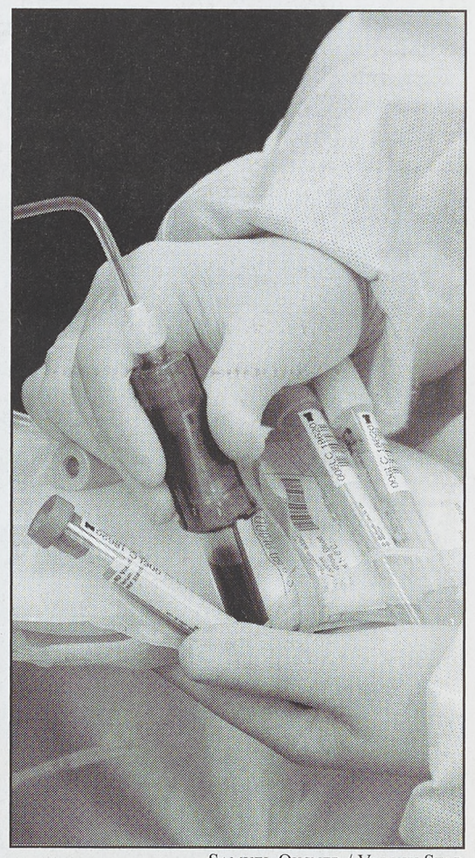
continued from page 1

Upon entering you are asked a few questions regarding your health such as, medicine intake and sexual activity. Once completed you are taken to one of the four cots set up on each side of the mobile. A small poke and ten minutes later, one of the kind nurses straps a Band-Aid onto your arm. Then sends you off to the front to have a seat where you are given water, juice and snacks.

Each pint of blood taken from a donor goes to help accident victims, people undergoing surgery, and patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer, or other diseases such as sickle cell.

"Come down and donate we need you, the patients need you," said Jamila Stewart, a registered nurse at the blood drive.

To be eligible donor students had to be in good health, 17 years old or older with a photo ID and weigh a minimum of 110 pounds. Other restrictions apply, such as taking certain medications and having a tattoo or piercing done in the past twelve months. For any questions on a future blood drive contact the Student Health Center (818) 947-2918.



SAMUEL OKSNER / VALLEY STAR

BLOOD COLLECTOR - An American Red Cross nurse fills viles.

Sound Matters for Grande Opening

LAUREN LEES
ONLINE EDITOR

Short and stocky, Berto Blanco Perez grazes through Monarch Square wearing a snugly-fitted baseball hat, a blaring graphic tee and jeans. His look is hip-hop, but his passion is rock, evident with his band The Grande Opening.

The Grande Opening is alternative punk rock with underlying influences by new wave bands The Cure, The Smiths and The Who. With hardcore guitar rifts, screams and beautiful lyrics, such as "I wanna hold you close/ Wanna feel the way this should/ Like all the memories I hold inside," from their soaring song "My Obsession," Perez isn't trying to be something edgy or new, but to simply make music.

"I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel with my music anymore," said Perez. "I'm trying to just put out songs that I like to play and hope that other people enjoy it with me; [that they] like catchy hooks, aggressive verses and with a gang of vocals."

In his 20s, this Nor-Cal boy came to Los Angeles, wrote an album and started a band, all while attending Valley College as a physical therapy major. After finding his band mates through MySpace and Craigslist, Blanco was able to compose the music and write lyrics for The Grand Opening.

The band has been rocking since June of last year, playing his music and gaining a fan base thanks to manager Ronnie McCoullough, who Perez met at Valley in a music class they had together.

"Pretty much every address I remembered I sent packages of CDs and stickers to … I mean it's pretty much getting the information out," said McCoullough. "That was the goal, send it out and let them just take it from there. I have never been to Mississippi, but my one friend goes to school there, and then the next thing you know, they have like 40 something friend requests on MySpace from Mississippi."

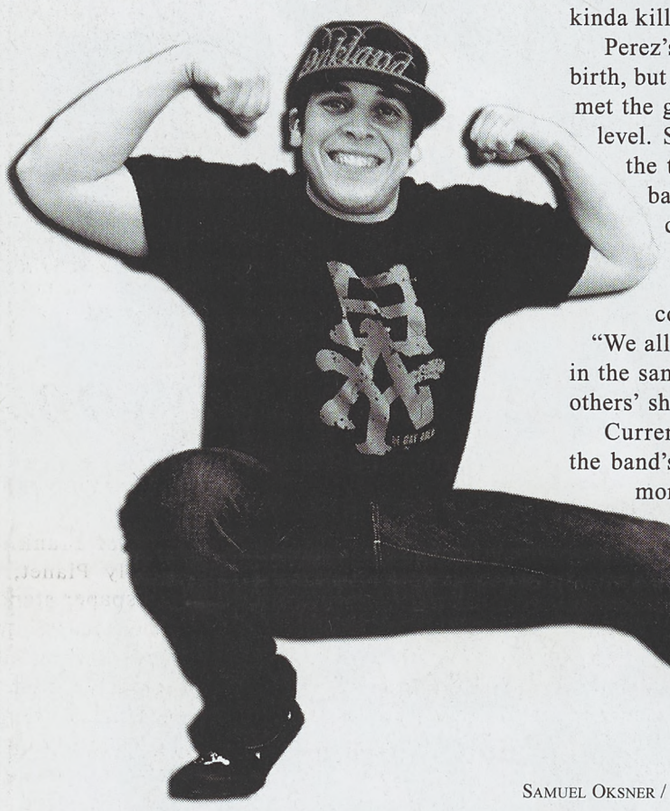
This isn't Perez's first attempt at music; after he graduated from high school, he joined the band Sol Ascending. Gaining airtime on LIVE 105, northern California's version of KROQ, and opening for acts like Papa Roach and Trapped, he tasted the flesh of fame, but similar to the death of grunge, the scene turned on the music, leaving him with nothing more than a nibble and his will to still play.

"It just kinda fell apart. The scene in the Bay Area was slowly melting away and disappearing," said Perez. "One of the major clubs we were a part of just completely shut down, and that killed a lot of bands and a lot of music scenes in that area. That kinda killed it for us."

Perez's love affair with music bloomed at his birth, but it wasn't until middle school that he first met the guitar that elevated the affair to the next level. Self taught, in high school he embraced the then-flourishing music scene, playing in bands and collaborating with other musicians, such as long time friend Zecki Iscan.

"He was a little kid with a big afro, coming to school with a guitar," said Iscan. "We all kind of hung out, all the different bands in the same studios and stuff, we all went to each others' shows and played in each others' bands."

Currently, Perez is working on content for the band's next EP and playing a few gigs in the months to follow. He still attends Valley and, while sitting through yet another lecture, he dreams of the day when he's on tour with his band, The Grande Opening, going across the country.



SAMUEL OKSNER / VALLEY STAR

MOVIE REVIEW



Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right

■ It's "GAME OVER" for Capcom's second attempt to turn video game legend into box office giant.

JOSH SPENCE
EDITOR AT LARGE

Stuck between video game fantasy and cinematic reality, director Andrzej Bartkowiak fails to deliver either as "Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun- Li" hits theaters dead on arrival.

Centering on the popular character from the Street Fighter franchise, Chun- Li played by Kristin Kreuk, narrates how she became the stuff of legend, her wealthy upbringing, the abduction of her father by the crime organization Shadaloo and her life on the streets of Hong Kong.

The film immediately fails due to Bartkowiak's indecision to make "Street Fighter" an action/ adventure or an earnest reboot. Bartkowiak gets credit with modern time and realistic setting but receives more criticism with the inverted helicopter kicks and mythic fireballs. The writing is stilted with the narration providing no insight while taking away any suspense. Establishing the film as one or the other would have generated the films credibility, compared to being bad at both.

Bartkowiak and writer Justin Marks biggest faux pas is the glaring oversight of the source material. For example Chun- Li is from China, not Hong Kong; M.Bison is from Thailand, not Ireland and Vega is supposed to be Spanish. These details may not matter to the casual fan, but the fans of the franchise (who will also be the largest if not only demographic to see the film) should be appalled.

Viewing the film in terms of it being a video game/ action film that is also a reboot for the series, "Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li" is less than adequate with more misses than hits.

The only bright spot in the film is the cinematography. Geoff Boyle provides vivid and colorful shots of Bangkok, which showcase the debauchery and depravity of the city.

Aside from that, the acting is overwrought yet dull. Chris Klein has the intensity of a cardboard cutout, Michael Clarke Duncan is officially a robot and Neil McDonough can be convincing as the Lucky Charms guy, not the leader of a crime organization. As for Kreuk, there is not much to say except that the director wanted her to be more seen than heard, which is a shame.

Unfortunately it appears that this latest incarnation is a low budget quick cash in on the massively popular relaunched video game released less than two weeks ago. Diehard and casual fans will be interested by name recognition alone, but save for the fact that there is no redeemable quality that makes this film watchable. Buyer beware.

LAVC EVENTS

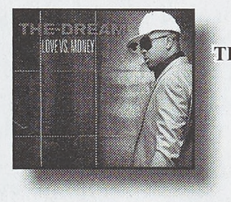
Wednesday, March 4

LAVC will hold a flag-raising and dedication ceremony for the recently remodeled Fulton Entry and Monarch Square at 12:30 p.m. at the flagpole near the main Fulton Avenue entrance. Light refreshments will be served. For more information or to RSVP, contact the President's Office at (818) 947-2321 or email lopezm@lavc.edu

UPCOMING RELEASES

CD

PICK OF THE WEEK:



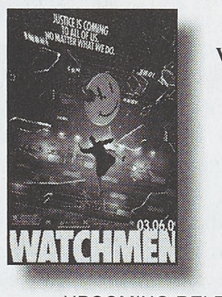
THE-DREAM, *LOVE VS. MONEY*

OTHER RELEASES:

Jadakiss, *The Last Kiss*
Kelly Clarkson, *All I Ever Wanted*
New Found Glory, *Not Without A Fight*

FILM

PICK OF THE WEEK:



WATCHMAN

UPCOMING RELEASES:

12
Horsemen
Phoebe in Wonderland

DVD

PICK OF THE WEEK:



MILK, *Sean Penn*

OTHER RELEASES:

Role Models
Cadillac Records
Let The Right One In

Think Transfer!

Thursday, March 5
CSU Los Angeles Rep 10am-1pm
Undecided Major/Career Workshop 1pm-2pm
Job Shadow Orientations 1pm-2pm or 5:30pm-6:30pm

Friday, March 6
Overcome Math Anxiety Workshop 1pm-3pm MS 103

LAVC Los Angeles Valley College
5800 Fulton Avenue · Valley Glen · California 91401- 4096

JOB FAIR
Corrections & Homeland Security

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2009
Time: 9am — 3pm
Place: Monarch Hall

Agencies Represented:

US Bureau of Prisons
FBI
US Secret Service
US Marshalls
FEMA
US Immigration & Customs Service
California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation
LA County Probation Department
LA County Sheriff's Department
LA Police Department
LA City Fire Department
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Monarchs' Rally Too Little Too Late To Extend Postseason

■ **The Valley College Monarchs lose to Cerritos College in the first round of the playoffs.**

ROBERT R. KING
STAFF WRITER

The Valley College Monarchs lost 80-76 at home last Wednesday to the Cerritos College Falcons in an intense first round game in the California Community College Athletic Association Southern Division playoffs.

Valley Head Coach Virgil Watson said, "(Cerritos) executed well and they made us uncomfortable at times, which put them in the position to win the game."

The game began with a torrid pace, but the teams had a hard time scoring due to numerous turnovers. The Falcons pulled ahead by seven points with less than eight minutes to go in the half when Valley staged a rally behind the shooting of Nate Bichara, Curtis Leslie, and Jerome Lowe. Bichara hit two three pointers within the last six minutes as Valley pulled ahead 36-35 at halftime.

"Nate comes to play every single night," said Coach Watson of Bichara's performance. "Part of his job [on the court] is to make shots for us and he did that last night."

Bichara began the second half with a three pointer which energized the crowd inside the South Gymnasium. Cerritos tied the game at 45 at the 16:48 mark of the second half on a three pointer by sophomore guard Gregory Preer.

Preer's shot sent the Falcon's on a 12-4 run over the next four minutes, giving Cerritos a five-point lead.

"Greg had a real good game," said Cerritos Head Coach Jesse Teplitzky. "He's a capable kid . . . and it's nice to see him step up in a playoff game."

Valley answered with an 11-2 run over the next 1:15, pulling ahead 60-56. Jerome Lowe contributed with a three pointer and capped it with a tough lay-up and free throw following a foul.

Cerritos leveled the score with just over nine minutes to go. Valley fought back to pull ahead again by four points with 6:10 to go.

The game changed when Cerritos answered with a 9-0 run over the next 2:40 with contributions by Preer and freshman Jeremy Pope taking a 74-69 lead with less than three minutes to go.

Valley never led again, but pulled within one at 74-73 with 3:15 left in the game. Moments later during a loose ball struggle, Jerome Lowe appeared to hurt his right leg but remained in the game.

"I knew that to beat Valley we would have to force some turnovers . . . we tried to have some energy and get after them."

- Jesse Teplitzky
Head Coach, Cerritos

"It was a competitive game and he and I felt he could continue to play [after the injury]." said Coach Watson about Lowe's apparent injury. "He's helped us in many games by making big shots,"

The Monarchs had their chances. With less than a minute remaining Lowe drove the ball into the key and put up an awkward shot, missing Nate Bichara who was wide open on the top of the key in three-point range for a game tying attempt.

Lowe heaved up a three pointer with less than five seconds left and missed. The rebound went to the Falcons and the game was essentially over.

"I knew that to beat Valley we would have to force some turnovers . . . we tried to have some energy and get after them," said Coach Teplitzky.

According to Coach Watson, "There are obviously things you could do a little differently [at the end of the game]. You could say 'could I do this different' but there are other factors."

Coach Watson said that after the game the players were disappointed about the loss but at a team meeting Thursday he, "Tried to remind them of their accomplishments this year" so they can move on and make next season even more successful.

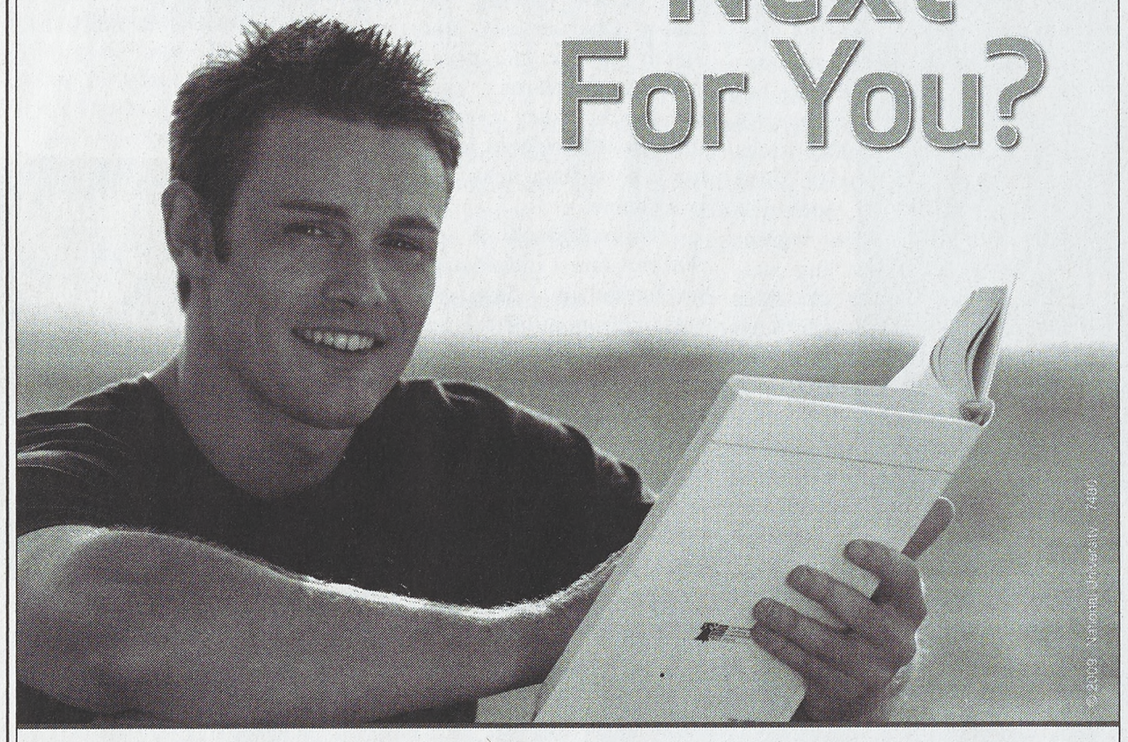


SCOTT MITCHELL, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

MR CLUTCH - Valley College guard, Chris Horstman scores a layup against a Cerritos College defender in the Monarch's playoff loss at home last week.Horstman's hustle on the court earned him honorable mention in the 2009-2009 Western State Conference Team.

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The Game that Became a Business

JOE LAFLEUR
OPINION EDITOR

When baseball began, it was a game and only a game, but as it progressed it became a business. Somewhere along the chalk line of history, between Cy Young and Ken Griffey Jr., we lost sight of what it used to be and became obsessed with power numbers, both on the field and on a paycheck.

The philosophy for baseball has become get as much money as you can for as long as you can. Long-term contracts that come out to over $20 million per year are what every player desires. If you're looking to point a finger, go no further than Scott Boras, a glorified suit and failed minor leaguer who is rapidly accelerating the downfall of this game.

Boras manages some of the most overpaid and overrated athletes in the game, such as Alex Rodriguez, Mark Texieira and Manny Ramirez. A-Rod currently has the biggest contract in sports history, paying him $252 million over 10 years. Texieira holds the third largest contract in MLB history ($180 million over eight years) and for a career .284 hitter, fans question why he is worth that much.

The third man on the list, Ramirez, is currently without a contract and a team because he and his money grubbing, plague of an agent feel that $25 million per season isn't worth his time.

There is a simple solution to solving this philosophy that has spread across baseball like a swarm of gnats on a humid day – stop negotiating with Scott Boras' clients. Baseball would be better off without these stuck-up bonus babies who place money before the game. There are plenty of other players from the majors to the sandlots that would play this game for free.

I know the argument that comes next. They wouldn't put up the numbers that these guys do. It is this obsession with big numbers that has led the game down this dark tunnel in the first place. Fans stopped coming to the ballparks because they thought the game wasn't exciting enough, so owners began to pay the guys who put bodies in the seats. When the players realized this, they sought more money because they knew that they could get away with it.

Now teams like the Yankees will pay more than top dollar to put together a lineup of all stars in order to sell out the stadium and hopefully win a championship. And Boston fans, before you get on your high horse and start clapping for the previous statement, the Red Sox do the same thing. Get over it.

The business of baseball is now an ugly one. It has been tainted by money, steroids and owners, and the purity there once was is seldom found from day to day. It seems unlikely that we will ever get back to that point when players took the field for the love of the game and not the bonuses and endorsements. But the beautiful thing about baseball is that it spans the decades. So when hope seems to fade, you can look back in the archives, at the tapes of the men and women who played for more than excessive contracts. You can watch Jackie Robinson play through hate and threats, rise above it all, and then steal home with ease and finesse. If anyone deserves millions it was Robinson, but in all likelihood, he would have kindly refused it because he knew there were more important aspects of the game.

Opinion

New Football Coach On Campus Already?

LUCAS THOMPSON
STAFF WRITER

With the 2009 season just around the corner and conditioning already in full swing, Valley's football program is without a head coach and searching for prospects to fill the void. Filling the position of a head coach in any athletic program can be a daunting task to say the least. With successful former Valley coach Jim Fenwick back on campus; the process of eliminating candidates could be an easier than one would assume.

Jim Fenwick, coaching the Monarchs from 1991-96, led the team to an astounding four bowl games and one conference championship. During his coaching career at Valley, the team was consistently ranked nationally, grasping the number one spot in 1995. Conveniently, Fenwick returned to Valley in the fall as a physical education instructor. No official announcements have been made at this time, but with the subtle return of such a noteworthy leader, it seems not even an offer from Pete Carroll could sway the inevitable decision.

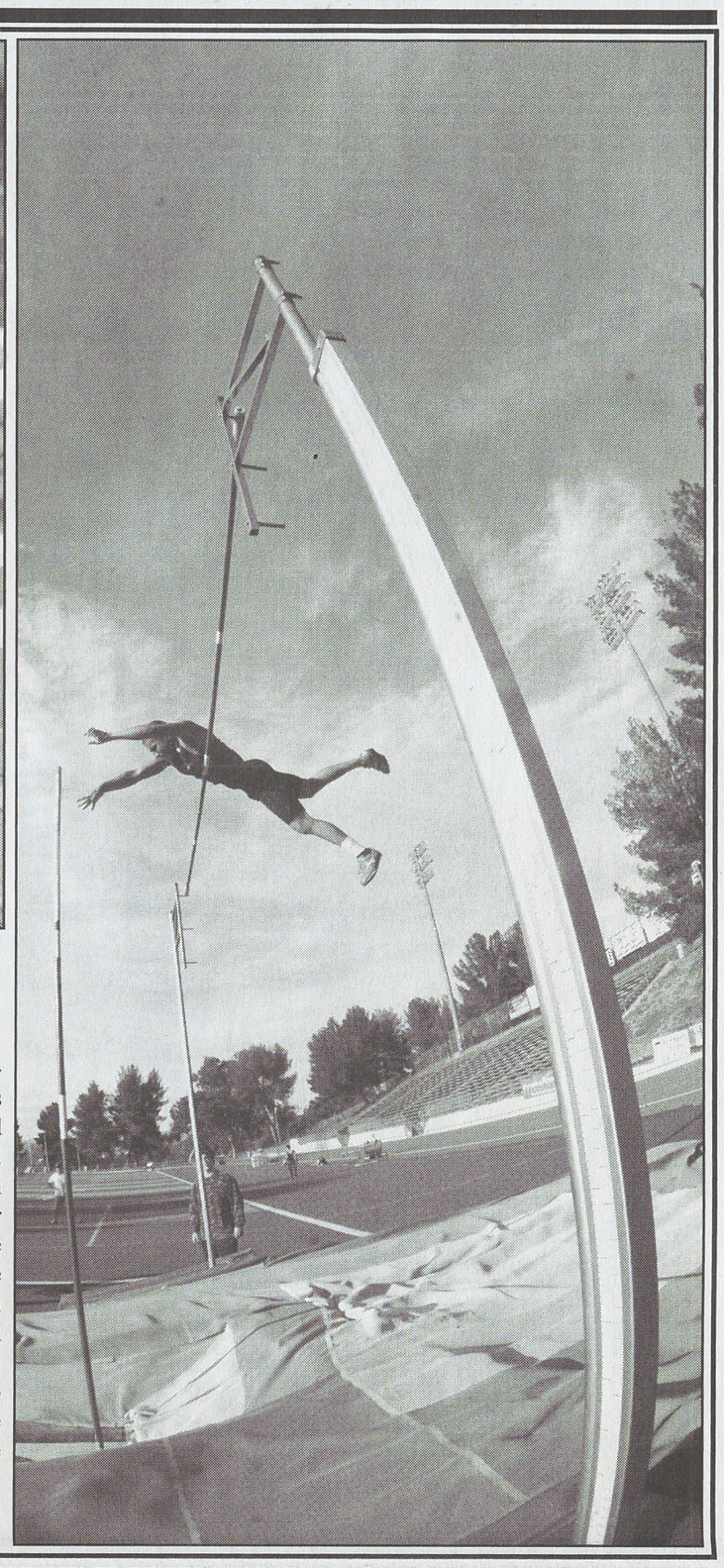
According to the elections committee, 17 candidates were being considered to fill the position of head coach in the fall.

"Jim Fenwick is strictly a long term substitute for the physical education department …it has nothing to do with the head coaching decision," Athletic Director Chuck Ferrero said. "There's a strict process we have to follow… and we are going straight by the book."

Former head coach Jimmy Sims took over the position in 2005 with a struggling Valley team to reconcile. The team had gone consecutive years in the losing column and was quickly losing the confidence of University recruiters. Although Sims unquestionably failed at making the team successful, his determination was to start with the basics; lowering and sustaining the ineligibility rate amongst football players significantly.

September 5 marks the date the Monarchs will face the Ventura Pirates in their first game of the upcoming season. Who will lead the players onto the field is still speculation. But considering current circumstances in the physical education department, a small degree of reason unveils the masked man may not be unaccustomed to the Valley sideline. The final decision will be announced in the next couple weeks as the committee goes through each of the possible candidates. Regardless, whoever takes the reins will assuredly have a difficult task to complete.





Monarchs Hurdle Competition

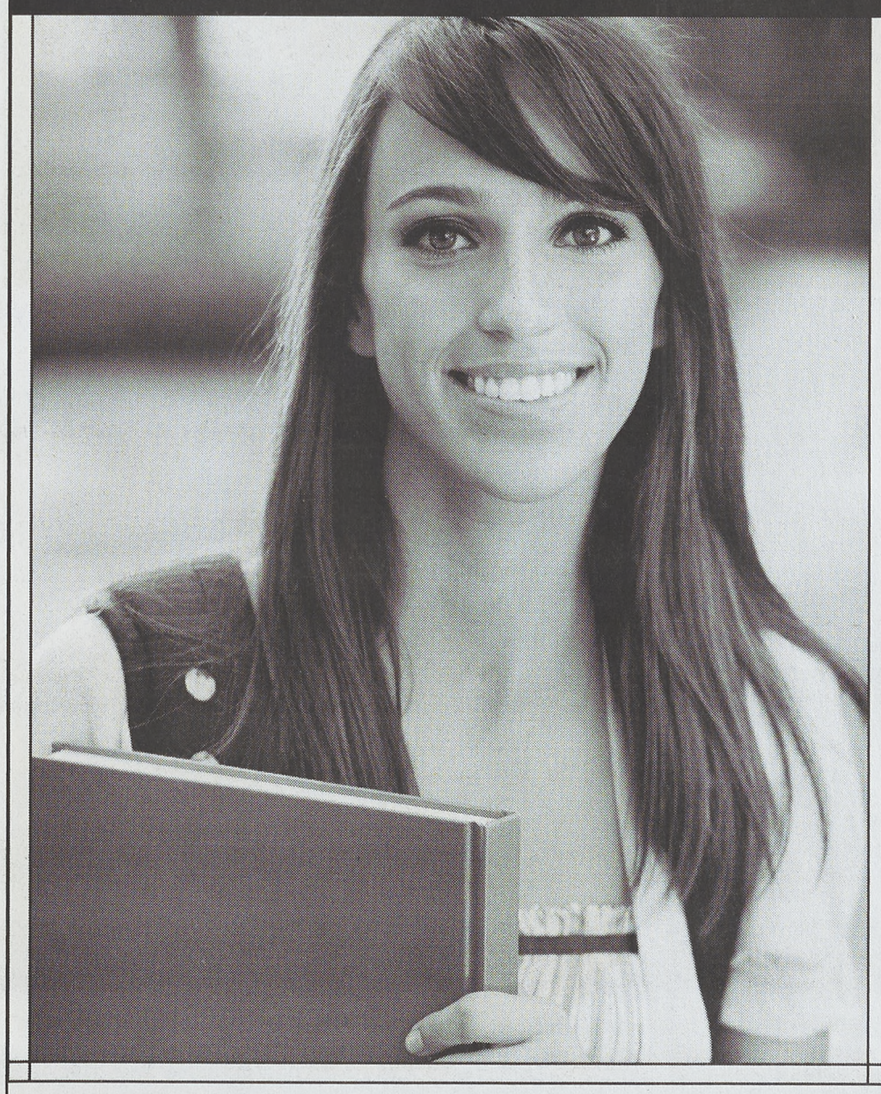
PHOTOS & TEXT BY
SCOTT MITCHELL, PHOTO EDITOR

The Valley College track team faced off against Bakersfield College, Santa Monica City College, and meet host, College of the Canyons, Friday under a crisp spring sky. The women finished third and the men finished in fourth place. Highlights for the men included first place finishes by Andrew Salg in the 3,000m race, Christopher Chan in pole vault, third place in pole vault by Hector Avelar, and a third place finish by Wayne Shepheard in the 110 high hurdles.

Highlights for the women included first place finishes in the 400m intermediate hurdles and 100 intermediate hurdles by Sylvia Aboniga. Eghosa Isa finished in first place in shot put and high jump. Mekka White-Edward finished first in the 800 meter run. Monarch track star Sylvia Aboniga (above) takes first place in the 100m and 400m Intermediate Hurdles. Aboniga finished more than seven seconds ahead of the pack in the 400 hurdles. Monarch pole-vaulter, Hector Avelar (right) cleared 12' 6" to take third place at the meet at College of the Canyons Friday. Teammate Christopher Chan took first place with a vault of 13'.

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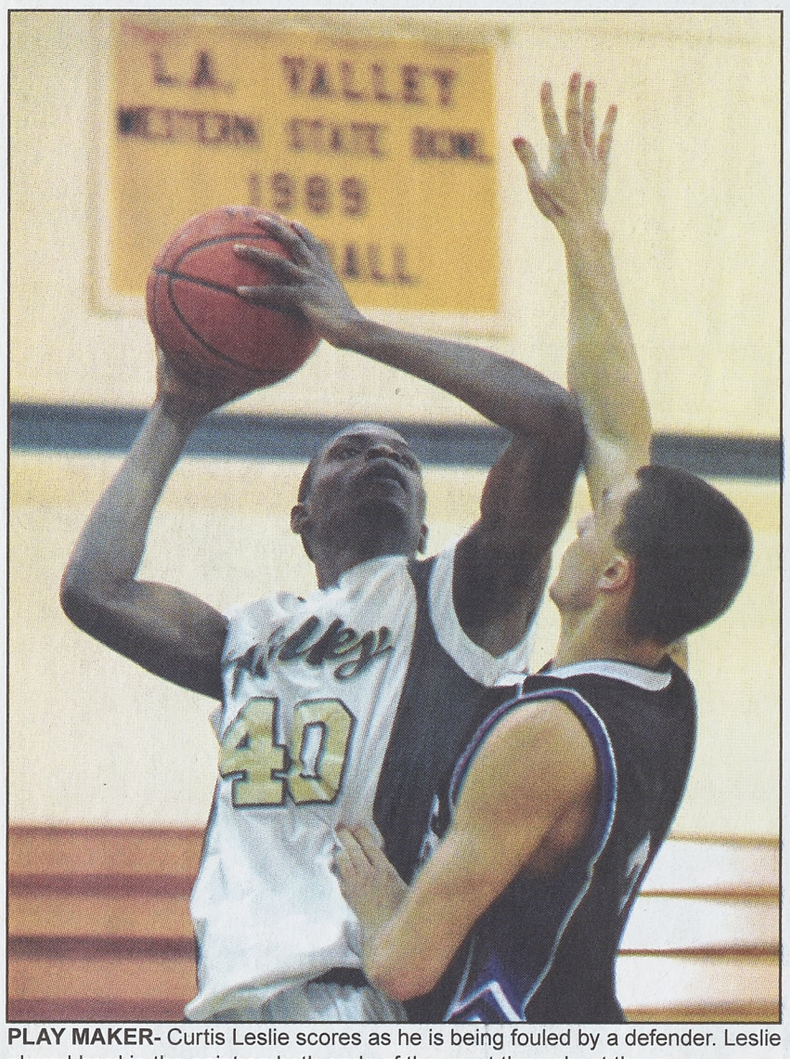
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GALLERY

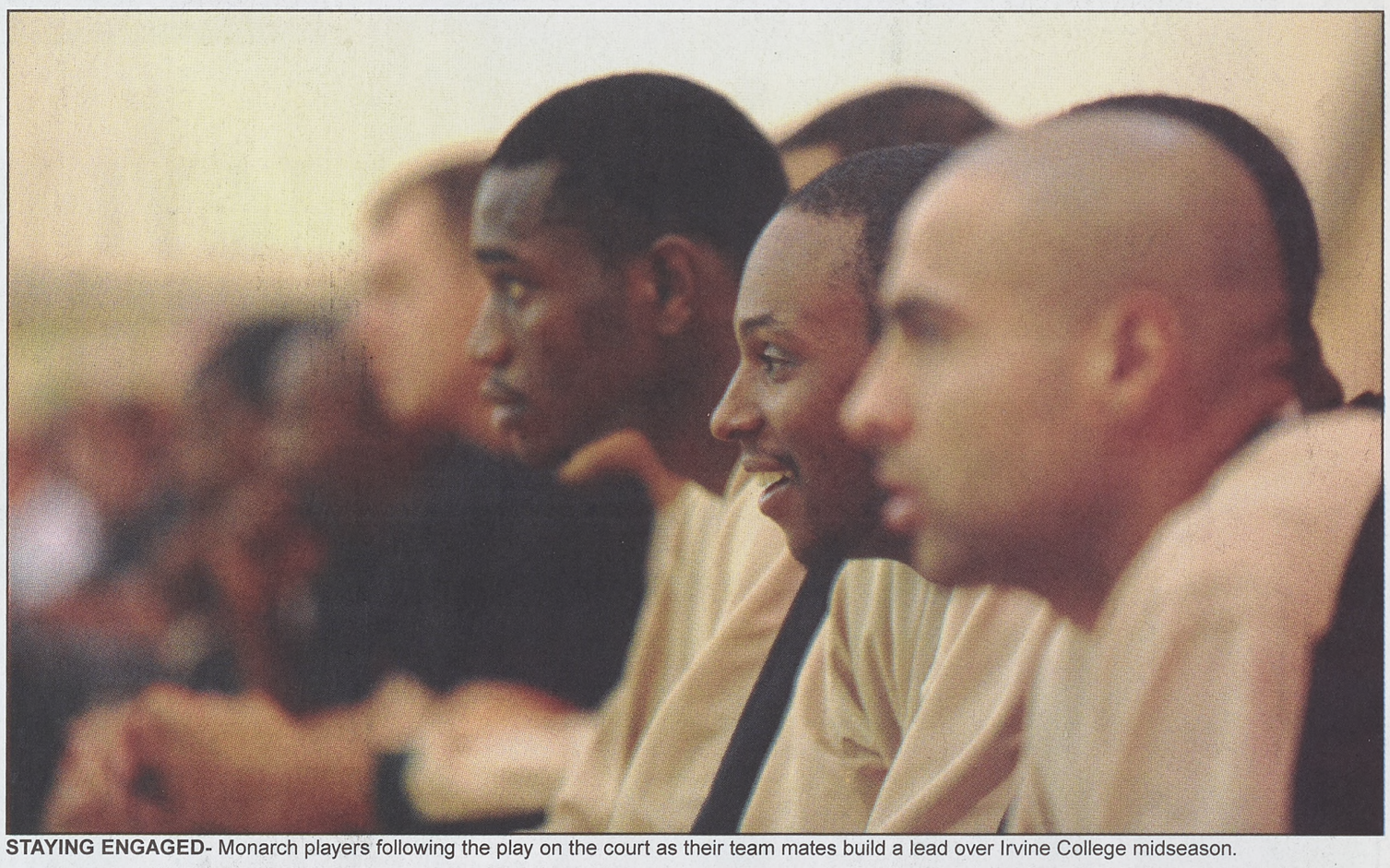


PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT MITCHELL, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

BAND OF BROTHERS - The Monarch basketball team huddle up one last time as they perpare to face Cerritos College in the first round of the playoffs at home. Their 16-12 season came to an end with a loss to Cerritos.



PLAY MAKER- Curtis Leslie scores as he is being fouled by a defender. Leslie played hard in the paint on both ends of the court throughout the season.



STAYING ENGAGED- Monarch players following the play on the court as their team mates build a lead over Irvine College midseason.



MATRIX RELOADED-The aggressive defensive play by Christian Holden has an opposing player on his back during a last second win over LA Trade Tech.

Hoop Dreams; Monarch Basketball 2009

SCOTT MITCHELL
PHOTO EDITOR

The 2009 men's basketball season started off with uncertainty and ended up with the Monarchs making it to the first round of the playoffs. Players and coaches shared many of the same expectations and questions throughout the season. How do we become the best team that we can be? What line-ups and rotations will produce the best results. How do we conquer our fears? How do we respond to challenge? When we fall, how fast do we get up? When our team needs us how do we respond?

Over the course of the season these questions, as well as many others were answered. Leaders emerged, players learned the system and what their roles were. Coaches coached. Players played, and the fans were treated to an exciting season of basketball.

There were times when the team was in a zone and seemed unbeatable. There were times when they had trouble bringing the ball up court. Games were lost that should have easily been won and games were won that shold have been lost. Such is the nature of college sports and this season was no exception.

The Monarchs were not the biggest or the fastest team in the conference, but it was apparent from the start that they were a well conditoned team that had talent. They came together as a team and they won and they lost as a team.

Shooting guard Nate Bichara and center Curtis Leslie made the 2008-2009 All Western State Conference Southern Division First Team. Guards Chris Horstman and Jerome Lowe made First Team Honoable mention.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER- Coach Virgil Watson and his staff spent the entire season sharing strategies and fundamentals.